



200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

KINDERGARTEN

Fact Sheet
65

February 2009

Is kindergarten mandatory for all children?

Yes. Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations (COMAR 13A.08.01.01B) requires that a child who resides in Maryland must attend a public or nonpublic kindergarten program regularly during the school year before entering the first grade unless the child is enrolled in an alternative program as specified in COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2B.

Can a child be exempted from the kindergarten attendance requirement?

Yes. State Board of Education regulations allow parents or legal guardians to submit a one-year level of maturity waiver for a kindergarten-age child if they believe that a delay in kindergarten attendance is in the best interest of their child. The child, however, must attend kindergarten the next year. To defer a child's kindergarten attendance for one year, parents or legal guardians must file a written request with the local Superintendent of Schools before the opening of the school year in which the child becomes five years old, asking that enrollment be delayed due to the child's level of maturity. The child must be registered for enrollment in kindergarten the following school year.

How old must a child be to attend kindergarten? Can a younger child be admitted to kindergarten?

As a result of recommendations from the Maryland Kindergarten Committee in 2002, COMAR 13A.08.01.02(B) was amended to require that a child admitted to the kindergarten program in the public schools be five years old or older on September 1 of the school year in which the child applies for entrance. Local boards of education are also required to adopt a regulation permitting a four-year-old child, upon request by the parent or guardian, to be admitted to kindergarten if the local school superintendent or the superintendent's designee determines that the child demonstrates capabilities warranting early admission. The policies and procedures for determining whether or not a child gains early admission to kindergarten are determined by the local school system.

Is kindergarten a full-day program?

Yes. Since school year 2007-08, all kindergarten programs in the public schools are full-day programs operating for 6.5 hours a day to support the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of kindergarten students.